



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# News Release

February 8, 2004

## **FORMER HIGH-RANKING OFFICIAL FOR HOLY LAND FOUNDATION ORDERED REMOVED FROM THE UNITED STATES**

LOS ANGELES – An immigration judge from the Department of Justice ruled today that a Jordanian national who served as a key fund-raiser in Los Angeles for an organization suspected of funneling money to the terrorist group Hamas must leave the United States.

Based on evidence presented by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) during a series of hearings that concluded in December, Immigration Judge D.D. Sitgraves found that former Holy Land Foundation leader Abdel Jabbar Hamdan was ineligible for relief from removal. Her finding was based upon evidence that Hamdan knew or should have known that his fund-raising activities provided material support to a terrorist organization. However, the Immigration Judge also ruled that Hamdan was likely to be tortured if removed to Jordan. Her removal order prevents ICE from returning Hamdan to Jordan, but not to any other country.

During Hamdan's immigration hearings, ICE attorneys introduced videotapes, as well as excerpts from his past speeches and writings. In her decision, the Immigration Judge commented specifically on the videotapes, which depicted the 44-year-old standing in front of a Hamas flag while asking for money. In the videotape there is a call for Jihad, and praise for martyrdom and bloodletting. The Judge found that this contradicted Hamdan's defense that he did not know the money was intended for Hamas.

From 1990, until the Holy Land Foundation (HLF) was shut down by the federal government following 9/11, Hamdan served as the primary spokesperson and fund-raiser for the organization in Southern California. In July 2004, seven of the Foundation's top officials were named in a 42-count federal indictment alleging that they conspired to provide aid to a terrorist organization and the families of suicide terrorists. Hamdan was not charged in that case.

"Our laws prohibit aliens who are living here as our guests to use this country as a base to advocate terrorism or raise money for terrorist causes," said John Salter, Chief Counsel for ICE in Los Angeles. "We will use every tool at our disposal to safeguard our country and prevent individuals from obtaining funds here to advance the aims of terrorist organizations."

Hamdan, who was born in a Palestinian refugee camp, was arrested by ICE agents on July 27, 2004 and placed in immigration proceedings. He was charged with violating the terms of his student visa and living in the United States without valid immigration documents. During his immigration proceedings, Hamdan has been held without bond because of his fundraising activities on behalf of an organization linked to the sponsorship of terrorism.

#ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*